

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 CU-04 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIE-00 AF-06

ARA-10 EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IOE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 OIC-02 BIB-01 PA-02 PRS-01 SS-15 SP-02 AID-05

DHA-02 HEW-06 L-03 /108 W
----- 056241

O 161611Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6119

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 32779

NESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, PORG, UNESCO, US

SUBJECT: UNESCO MEETING ON DRAFT DECLARATION OF MASS
MEDIA PRINCIPLES: US STATEMENT IN GENERAL
DEBATE.

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF SUBJECT STATEMENT DELIVERED ON DECEMBER 15 BY US REPRESENTATIVE, RONALD F. STOWE.

2. THIS MEETING HAS BEEN CALLED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE TO EXAMINE A SERIES OF MOST IMPORTANT, MOST FUNDAMENTAL, AND OFTEN MOST SENSITIVE ISSUES, NAMELY THE COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS AMONG INDIVIDUALS AND PEOPLES. OUR MANDATE OF COURSE IS MORE PRECISE AND MORE SPECIFIC, IN THAT WE HAVE BEEN ASKED ONLY TO ADDRESS OURSELVES TO THE ROLE OR FUNCTION OF THE MASS MEDIA IN DEALING WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS. NEVERTHELESS IT IS ESSENTIAL DURING OUR DISCUSSIONS THAT WE KEEP IN MIND THE EXTRAORDINARY SIGNIFICANCE THAT THE UNDERLYING ISSUES OF COMMUNICATIONS HAVE FOR EACH OF OUR PARTICU-
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LAR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS, AND FOR THE INTER-

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG INDIVIDUALS AND PEOPLES AS WELL.

3. THE WIDE DIFFERENCES WHICH SEPARATE OUR RESPECTIVE APPROACHES TO THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA AND THE INTENSITY AND DETERMINATION WITH WHICH THOSE DIFFERENT FUNDAMENTAL VIEWS ARE HELD MAKE THE TASK WITH WHICH WE ARE CHARGED A MOST CHALLENGING AND DIFFICULT ONE. IT WILL COME AS NO SURPRISE TO OTHERS IN THIS ROOM WHEN I RECALL THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS FELT CONSIDERABLE DOUBT ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OR USEFULNESS OF DRAWING UP THIS KIND OF DECLARATION, PARTICULARLY WITHOUT A MORE GENERAL BASIC UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT ON WHAT WE ALL HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH BY THIS EFFORT.

4. WE CONTINUE TO FEEL THIS RESERVATION. WE HAVE HEARD TODAY A NUMBER OF SPEAKERS REFER TO THE FACT THAT WE ARE FACED IN THIS DEBATE WITH AT LEAST TWO FUNDAMENTAL AND DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA. THESE DIFFERENCES INVOLVE THE MOST BASIC ELEMENTS OF OUR SOCIETIES. WE MUST NOT BE UNDER ANY ILLUSIONS THAT THIS FORUM, THAT THESE DELEGATIONS, THAT THIS ORGANIZATION HAS THE CAPACITY OR THE MANDATE TO ELIMINATE OR SUBSTANTIALLY MODIFY THOSE DIFFERENCES. THIS IS NOT OUR TASK; THIS IS NOT WITHIN OUR ABILITY. WE ARE AN EXTREMELY DIVERSE WORLD, AND THIS FACT IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO ANY STATEMENTS MADE HERE.

5. HOWEVER, WE MAY INDEED BE ABLE TO DISCOVER SOME AREAS WHERE OUR ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT VIEWS CONVERGE, TO THIS EXTENT MY DELEGATION HAS COME PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY IN THIS INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATION OF ISSUES. LIKE OTHERS WE HAVE PREPARED A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS WHICH WE BELIEVE WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE CONCEPTS REFLECTED IN THE TEXT BEFORE US. WE HAVE NOT COME, HOWEVER, WITH THE INTENT TO ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE OR COERCE OTHERS TO ABANDON THEIR BASIC PHILOSOPHIES; AND WE WILL CERTAINLY NOT RESPOND POSITIVELY TO SUCH PRESSURES ON OURSELVES.

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6. JUST AS WE CANNOT RECONCILE THOSE DIFFERENCES HERE; NOR SHOULD WE TRY TO IGNORE OR OBSCURE THEM. TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD BE AN EXTRAORDINARY NAIVETE, AN UNREALISTIC AND POTENTIALLY DESTRUCTIVE EXERCISE, AN ABSURDITY WITHOUT THE FAINTEST HOPE OF RELIEVING THE GENUINE CONCERNS WHICH ARE FELT BY MANY.

7. WE MUST BE FULLY AWARE OF THE VERY WIDE DIVERGEN-

CIES WHICH SEPARATE US. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES HAVE MADE A VERY STRONG AND VERY BROAD COMMITMENT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH, WHETHER IT BE EXERCISED THROUGH THE PRINTED OR BROADCAST MEDIA OR BY INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS,

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INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 CU-04 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIE-00 AF-06

ARA-10 EA-09 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IOE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 OIC-02 BIB-01 PA-02 PRS-01 SS-15 SP-02 AID-05

DHA-02 HEW-06 L-03 /108 W

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A RIGHT WHICH WE HAVE INSISTED BE RELATIVELY UNFETTERED BY GOVERNMENT ACTION. THIS APPROACH IS OBVIOUSLY NOT UNIVERSALLY SHARED. OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER PEOPLES FOR THEIR OWN REASONS HAVE OFTEN ADOPTED DIFFERENT INTERNAL STANDARDS ALONG THE BROAD SPECTRUM OF POSSIBILITIES. FORTUNATELY IN OUR VIEW, THERE HAS SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS BEEN BASIC AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL TO A COMMITMENT TO THE FREE AND OPEN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS REGARDLESS OF FRONTIERS, A COMMITMENT WHICH HAS BEEN EXPRESSED MOST CLEARLY IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN THE UNESCO CONSTITUTION.

8. WE RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE EXERCISE OF THOSE RIGHTS, HOWEVER, MANY GENUINE AND LEGITIMATE CONCERNS HAVE

ARISEN, IN PARTICULAR, IF I MAY TAKE AN EXAMPLE,
CONCERNS ABOUT HOW TO ENSURE THAT THE FLOW OF INFORMA-
TION AND IDEAS IS TWO-WAY, RATHER THAN ONLY ONE. WE
ARE IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT A
MUTUAL EXCHANGE, A TWO-WAY FLOW IS INDEED REQUIRED IF
WE AS INDIVIDUALS, AS SEPARATE NATIONS, AND AS AN
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ARE TO ENJOY THE FULL BENEFITS
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FROM THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

9. HOW TO ENSURE SUCH A TWO-WAY EXCHANGE, HOWEVER, IS
A MATTER WHICH AFFECTS THE VERY RIGHT ITSELF. IN OUR
VIEW THE BASIC APPROACH AS REFLECTED IN THE INDIAN
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE III OF THE DRAFT BEFORE
US IS THE GENERAL DIRECTION IN WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY MUST PROCEED. THAT IS, OUR EFFORTS MUST BE
DIRECTED TOWARD DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY OF ALL PEOPLES
TO ARTICULATE THEIR VIEWS AND IDEAS THROUGH MASS MEDIA,
A GOAL WHICH IS AN ESPECIALLY PROPER AND CONSTRUCTIVE
ONE FOR THIS ORGANIZATION. WE WOULD CONSIDER IT MOST
COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, MOST REGRESSIVE, AND MOST UN-
ACCEPTABLE TO TAKE THE OPPOSITE APPROACH, NAMELY THAT
OF FURTHER RESTRICTING OR INHIBITING PRESENT ABILITIES
TO EXERCISE THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. LET US LOOK
VERY SERIOUSLY AND VERY HARD AT HOW WE CAN REDUCE
ANY IMBALANCE IN TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS BY BUILDING UP
THE CAPACITY OF ALL INTERESTED PEOPLES, RATHER THAN BY
INHIBITING THE CAPACITY OF SOME. HERE TOO WE MUST TAKE
CARE TO TAKE A LONG RANGE VIEW; IT IS, PRESUMABLY, THE
DESIRE OF ALL PEOPLES TO DEVELOP THEIR CAPABILITIES IN
THIS AREA RATHER THAN FOR EVER REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, AND HENCE LET US FOCUS
OUR EFFORTS NOW ON THIS GOAL.

10. AS WE APPROACH THE PARTICULAR TASK BEFORE US THIS
WEEK, WE MUST KEEP THESE GENERAL OBSERVATIONS IN MIND;
THE WIDE DIFFERENCES SEPARATING DIFFERENT NATIONAL
AND CULTURAL VIEWS, THE STRENGTH WITH WHICH THOSE
VIEWS ARE HELD, AND THE LONG TERM PROGRESSIVE GOALS
WHICH WE HOPE TO PURSUE. IN THIS LIGHT IT APPEARS TO
MY DELEGATION THAT IF OUR WORK IS TO BE RESPONSIBLE
AND PRODUCTIVE WE MUST CONCENTRATE ON IDENTIFYING
THOSE AREAS IN WHICH THERE IS GENUINE UNIVERSAL AGREE-
MENT AND ATTEMPT TO BUILD ON THAT BASIS. WE ALL KNOW
THAT ADOPTION OF VIEWS AT ANY EXTREME WILL NOT BE
SUPPORTED BY A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF STATES, AND THE
RESULTS OF THE MEETING WILL AT BEST BE DISREGARDED AND
AT WORST BE A SET BACK TO ANY CONSTRUCTIVE FUTURE
ATTEMPTS TO LOOK AT THESE ISSUES IN A MULTILATERAL

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FORUM. TO BE MEANINGFUL TO ANYONE, A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OF THIS SORT MUST HAVE VIRTUALLY UNIVERSAL SUPPORT. WE URGE, THEREFORE, THAT THE MEETING PROCEED ON THE CHALLENGING BUT PRODUCTIVE BASIS OF OBTAINING THAT BROAD CONSENSUS. WE WISH TO ASSOCIATE OURSELVES WITH THOSE WHO EARLIER TODAY HAVE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THIS MEETING OF EXPERTS SHOULD, INDEED MUST, WORK TOWARD AN AGREEMENT THAT ALL DELEGATIONS CAN SUPPORT. THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN".

RUSH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INFORMATION MEDIA, POLICIES, MEETINGS, INFORMATION CONTROL, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS32779
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750437-0227
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751235/aaaabfaf.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <21 JAN 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNESCO MEETING ON DRAFT DECLARATION OF MASS MEDIA PRINCIPLES: US STATEMENT IN GENERAL
TAGS: OCON, PORC, US, UNESCO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006